

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Boaters Reminded to Wear Life Jackets**

#### *Tri-State Boating Safety Fair May 5 at Lake Havasu State Park*

(Lake Havasu, AZ – April 6, 2007) – A consortium of state, local and Federal boating agencies are hosting the fourth annual Tri-State Boating Safety Fair to educate boaters about boating safety, especially the importance of life jackets and the newest danger of Quagga mussels.

With the recent furor over Quagga mussel infestation, boating officials worry that boaters will lose sight of the most important boating safety device ever devised—the personal flotation device, most often called a life jacket.

"Life jackets save lives period, said Raynor Tsuneyoshi, Director of the California Department of Boating and Waterways. "I know for a fact that if we could get every boater to wear a life jacket on the water, we would have less than half as many people killed on this river system each and every year."

Tsuneyoshi and other boating officials hear just about every excuse for the lack of life jacket wear on the Colorado River, from "it's too hot" to the "not-so-comfortable" excuse. But, according to Tsuneyoshi newer, self-inflatable flotation devices have solved that problem, and traditional life jackets are more comfortable, affordable and durable than ever.

This year teams of safety professionals from three states will come together to do boating safety demonstrations on the river and encourage everyone to wear life jackets. The fourth annual Tri-State Boating Safety Fair is scheduled for Saturday, May 5, at Lake Havasu State Park from 10 am to 2 pm and the Arizona State Parks' 50th Anniversary will be celebrated the entire day at the park with programming for children

and families. Besides life jacket wear, boating pros will focus on boating safety tips, navigation rules, sober boating and the importance of wearing a life jacket. This year, boating officials worry that the safety message will be overshadowed by the recent discovery of Quagga mussels on the Colorado River System.

“Quaggas are a nasty invasive species that does tremendous damage to infrastructure and ecosystems,” said Fred Messmann, boating law administrator from Nevada. “We want people to be aware of the Quagga and help us stop this menace, but at the same time, we want people to remember to be safe while they are boating.”

The fair will take time to educate on Quagga, reminding boaters to clean their boats and trailers thoroughly to prevent the spread of the destructive species. Experts will be on hand to demonstrate cleaning techniques, explain the issue and provide clarification to boaters with questions.

The Boating Safety Fair will include public safety information booths, a demonstration of a water rescue, free vessel safety checks, and a chance to win a personal watercraft or a 7-day houseboating trip. Safety Fair participants can register to win the trip by taking the Tri-State Boating Safety Quiz.

The United States Coast Guard Auxiliary and state boating safety agencies will be conducting free vessel safety checks to ensure that a boater has all legal requirements and safety gear aboard the boat. In addition, corporate sponsors will be giving 150 families a chance to bring in an outgrown or unsafe life jacket and trade it for a brand new one from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., while supplies last.

The Arizona State Parks department will also be celebrating their 50th Anniversary of the State Parks in Arizona so a tent with children's activities and VIP ceremonies will be part of this year's Tri-State Celebration.

Visitors at the event and all along the river will also receive a “boating safety bag” full of small gifts and educational material about boating laws in the three states through which the Colorado River runs. Boating officials and law enforcement officers from each state will hand out boating safety bags and answer questions at 27 different boat launch

ramps along the Colorado River. “We want to reach as many people from both sides of the river as possible before this year’s boating season”, said Kevin Bergersen, Arizona’s Boating Law Administrator. “Again, life jackets, sober boating and safe operation are our key messages to boaters.”

Several different states, local organizations and boating safety organizations will host events and demonstrations throughout the day. The California boating safety team will demonstrate "hooked goggles" that simulate the debilitating effects of alcohol, and water rescue demonstrations will be performed with the cooperation of various law enforcement agencies.

Day-use entry fee at the park will be waived for the regular \$9 per car and the public is encouraged to stay the entire day to picnic, swim, fish and watch the events. A boat launching fee of \$9 will still be charged. For more information about this Boating Safety Fair call Lake Havasu State Park at (928) 855-9394 or see the website [www.BoatColoradoRiver.com](http://www.BoatColoradoRiver.com).

- 30 -

***ATTENTION REPORTERS:*** *Before this event call for story opportunities and a fact sheet... On the day of the event reporters should check in at the Media tent by 9 AM or call in advance to set up appointments with spokespersons. You will be able to board boats at 10:30 AM for 11AM demonstrations. High resolution photos from prior years are available. Details at: [www.BoatColoradoRiver.com](http://www.BoatColoradoRiver.com)*